

2.0 INTRODUCTION

The King County Department of Transportation (KCDOT) is pleased to present the 2003 Annual Safety Report. This report is prepared by the Road Services Division's Traffic Engineering Section, and is an integral part of KCDOT's Safety Management System.

A number of changes have been made in the format and contents of this report. While previous reports have focused on reporting accident data, this report has been expanded to include additional analysis of accident data, a summary of safety activities completed by KCDOT, assessment of the impact of safety improvement projects, and recommendations to improve safety efforts.

We hope that readers find this report informative and useful. A feedback form is provided in the front of this report for readers who would like to provide comments or suggestions.

2.1. Report Purpose

This report was prepared for several purposes, including:

- To meet the requirements of WAC 308-330-245, which requires agencies to issue an annual safety report.
- To provide collision and safety information to elected officials, King County DOT staff, and the general public.
- To highlight King County DOT's safety related programs, and policies.
- To assess the effectiveness of King County DOT's ongoing safety improvement activities.
- To increase driver awareness with respect to safety concerns.
- To provide critical information that can be used to better allocate limited safety funds.

Ultimately, the goal of this report is to improve the safety of the traveling public.

2.2. Information Sources

The majority of the collision information provided in this report comes from the King County Collision Record System (KCCRS) database, which contains information on reported collisions that occurred between 1997 and 2003. Information on collisions that occurred prior to 1997 was obtained from KCDOT's Intersection Magic® database, which contains collision data from 1984 on.

The Washington State Patrol provided collision data for accidents occurring prior to 1997. Collision data for accidents occurring between 1997 and 2003 were entered into

KCCRS database by King County DOT staff. In both cases, the information was obtained directly from collision reports prepared by the responding Officer at the scene of the collision. In order to be entered into the database, a collision must occur on a county-maintained roadway within unincorporated King County, and must meet the reporting threshold of \$500 in property damage or result in an injury or fatality.

Information on state and national collision trends used for the purposes of comparison is obtained from a variety of sources, including the Washington State Highway Accident Report, National Cooperative Highway Research Program (NCHRP) Reports, Washington State's Office of Financial Management, Washington State Department of Motor Vehicles and publications of the American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO).

Other information used in this report is courtesy of several local agencies, including the State of Washington's Office of Financial Management for population data, the County Road Administration Board (CRAB) and the Road Services Division's Engineering Services section for roadway miles maintained by King County, and the Traffic Engineering Section for traffic count data.

Sources of information are discussed further in Appendix A.

2.2.1. Limitations of Data

A report is only as good as the data that it utilizes. For this reason it is important to be aware of the quality and limitations of the data in this report.

The two databases contain information on nearly 100,000 collisions. While significant effort is directed toward quality control, databases of this size inherently contain data entry errors. The Officer's reports may also contain errors. Despite this, the overall quality of the data is considered acceptable for the purposes of this report.

2.3.

Report Organization

This report is organized as follows:

Section One contains the Executive Summary, and this Introduction is contained in Section Two. A discussion of trends in population, land area, and traffic conditions within Unincorporated King County is provided in Section Three.

Section Four addresses ten-year collision trends, and Section Five discusses collisions by accident type. Section Six provides a breakdown of collisions according to selected categories, such as lighting conditions, road surface conditions, and circumstances contributing to the accidents.

Section Seven provides information on KCDOT's safety related projects and programs. Recommendations are offered in Section Eight.

Appendix A provides further information on data sources used in this report, while Appendix B discusses formulas used. Appendix C contains additional tables and figures that do not appear in the body of the report. Information on the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) is included in Appendix D.